

**PASTORAL LEADERSHIP THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP IN VARIOUS CHURCH  
SETTINGS IN THE CALIFORNIA PACIFIC ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

A Professional Project

presented to

the Faculty of the

Claremont School of Theology

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

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May 2006



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has been presented to and accepted by the  
faculty of Claremont School of Theology in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

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## **Abstract**

### **Pastoral Leadership through Discipleship in Various Church Settings in the California Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church**

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No pastor can develop ministry without help. Those who are called “super pastors” also acknowledge that they have been helped by faithful people of God who supported them in many ways. The support of laity makes many things possible in ministry. Most of them are not merely church members but Disciples of Christ who have been trained and taught to serve God’s people faithfully. The role of laity is very important especially in the United Methodist Church where the lay leadership is continually encouraged and practiced. Lay leaders often play a critical role as an extension to reach deeply to people who are different in race, culture, and traditions. Multi-ethnic staff and committee members can really contribute in developing into a successful multicultural church. Lay leaders are well presented at the Annual Conference. United Methodist pastors learn, soon or later, that they must work closely with the laity. Although working with the laity can be a blessing to fulfill God’s will in the local

church, sometimes it can turn out to be a disaster for both pastors and the laity. Laity should be trained to be Disciples of Christ who embrace diversity to their own hearts, and not just another power figures to control the administrative matters of the church.

Often after witnessing the church split and division among its members, church leaders have come to realize that some pastors have been busy in making *their* disciples, but not the Disciples of Christ. The sole purpose of the discipleship is to help people to be like Christ in their lives. It is not to be loyal to pastors, not even to the church. Loyalty is only the by-product of a genuine discipleship. Discipleship should draw people to Christ, not necessarily to the one who is discipling (the discipler).

This project will share how the discipleship can change the dynamic and atmosphere of a local congregation especially in the multicultural and shared facility setting and how this can influence the society that we live in. Chapter 1, which is the introduction, will address the importance of pastoral leadership. Chapter 2 and 3 will examine the pastoral leadership in the multicultural congregation and its impact in the shared facility setting. Chapter 4 and 5 will deal with the importance of pastoral leadership through discipleship and how

discipleship should be done in the local church. It will also share as to how one discipling congregation can influence other congregations and empower them through discipleship as well. Chapter 6 will challenge the pastors as it examines the importance of the spirituality of a pastor. The growth and health of the congregation ultimately rely on the spirituality of a pastor. It all comes down to one's pastoral leadership and spirituality. This project will propose that pastoral leadership through discipleship is the most effective way to lead, guide, and empower the body of Christ in various church settings.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Ministry in the Protestant church at the beginning of the twenty-first century is difficult. A spirit of frustration and despair afflicts many of the church's finest leaders. What once worked no longer appears effective, and many who are charged with the leadership of God's people are at a loss as to what to do. There is a vacuum of vision, of ideas and strategies with which to respond to the growing disparity between the life and ministry of the congregation and the real lives of people in our society. The connection between the faith of the church and the life of the people is strained to the breaking point, and harried pastors and lay leaders burn out at an alarming rate as they struggle to keep the church from losing all relevance in our postmodern world. Bill Easum has said, "Most mainline and established churches are dying because they only try to take care of their members. Three out of four will close over the next 25-30 years.... Most mainline churches are already irrelevant to the needs of postmodern people."<sup>1</sup>

The methods and strategies that effectively served to teach and support the life of faith in the past now seem outworn and unable to address the critical issues of our time. The church seems increasingly powerless, and pastors and the laity who serve the church in this challenging time wrestle like Jacob with the angel, seeking a blessing, trying desperately to be and remain relevant, wondering where the needed power surge will come from.

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<sup>1</sup> Plenary address presented at Changing Church Conference in Lansing, Michigan, January 14-16, 1999.

As important as the notion of church membership may have been in years past, it no longer works. The churches in the California Pacific Annual Conference are losing members in droves. All too many folks whose names still fill churches' membership rolls have long since slipped out the back door. The two most common reasons given: burnout and boredom. All too many churches are experiencing an unprecedented erosion of loyalty to the congregation itself. Active members not only give less time than ever before to the life and ministries of the church, but they consider themselves active when they worship only once or twice a month. Recent studies indicate that as many as one out of three active families in the average congregation is seriously considering changing its church affiliation. There are also great numbers of individuals and families who consider themselves members of a congregation but who rarely or never attend worship beyond weddings and funerals, Christmas, and Easter.

According to George Barna, "the American church is dying due to a lack of strong leadership. In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful resources, the church is actually losing influence. The primary reason is the lack of leadership. Nothing is more important than leadership."<sup>2</sup> It is a sign of deficient leadership when a pastor blames his or her people for the declining condition of one's church. Holding a leadership position in a Christian organization does not make one a spiritual leader. People know intuitively that claiming to be a leader or holding a leadership position does not make someone a leader. Peter Drucker observed: "There seems to be little correlation between

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<sup>2</sup> George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997), 18.

a man's effectiveness and his intelligence, his imagination or his knowledge."<sup>3</sup> A weak and declining church teetering on the brink of disbandment can be changed dramatically when a new pastor arrives. They may have had little hope for the survival of their church. Then along came a pastor who mobilized people into action, and they were astounded at the difference. The difference had little to do with the problems or the limitations. It had everything to do with good pastoral leadership.

### The Importance of Pastoral Leadership

Nearly twenty years ago, Peter Wagner boldly proclaimed a central church growth principle: "In America, the primary catalytic factor for growth in a local church is the pastor. In every growing, dynamic church I have studied, I have found a key person whom God is using to make it happen."<sup>4</sup> Wagner further stated that strong pastoral leadership is the first of many church growth signs of health: "Vital Sign Number One of a healthy church is a pastor who is a possibility thinker and whose dynamic leadership has been used to catalyze the entire church into action for growth."<sup>5</sup> Wagner later devoted an entire volume to the subject of pastoral leadership, *Leading Your Church to Growth*.<sup>6</sup>

The trend among many Christian leaders has been for an almost indiscriminate and uncritical acceptance of secular leadership theory without measuring it against the timeless precepts of Scripture. Contemporary Christian

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Drucker, *The Effective Executive* in *The Executive in Action* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1996), 525.

<sup>4</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow*, rev. ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984), 60.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>6</sup> Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984).

leaders build teams and lead their people through team-building exercises. Leaders, according to John Kotter of the Harvard Business School, function quite differently from managers. Leaders are responsible to provide vision, raise up other leaders, and create useful change. Managers, however, maintain the present system and seek to enhance it. Sadly, most church leaders are, in reality, managers.<sup>7</sup> More pastors nowadays are beginning to act more like CEOs than shepherds. Paradoxically, concurrent with the churches' discovery of popular leadership axioms, secular writers have been discovering the timeless truths of Christianity. It is common to read in secular leadership books that companies should make covenants with their people, that business leaders should love their people, that managers should be servant leaders, that leaders should show their feelings to their employees, that business leaders must have integrity, that leaders must tell the truth, and interestingly, that leaders must strive for a higher purpose than merely making a profit. These principles appear to be more in keeping with the Sermon on the Mount than with the Harvard Business School. Incredibly, as secular writers are embracing Christian teachings with the fervency of first-century Christians, Christian leaders are inadvertently jettisoning many of those same truths in an effort to become more contemporary.

"Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" asserts James MacGregor Burns.<sup>8</sup> Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus in their book, *Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge*, report that they

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<sup>7</sup> John Kotter, *John P. Kotter on What Leaders Really Do* (Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 1999), 51ff.

<sup>8</sup> James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 2.

discovered over 850 different definitions of leadership.<sup>9</sup> Voluminous material is currently being published on the subject of leadership, yet there seems to be no simple, universally accepted understanding of what leaders do. Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, in *Situational Leadership*, state that good leaders do two things. First, they have a readiness goal in mind for their followers. Second, they adjust their leadership style to the level of preparedness of an individual or group in order to progress toward the readiness goal. Hersey and Blanchard define readiness as “the ability and willingness of a person or group to take responsibility for directing their own behavior.”<sup>10</sup> Their theory is that there is no one best or right style of leadership, but one’s style must be adapted to fit the readiness level of those they are helping to reach the goal.

Leadership is ultimately measured not according to the leader’s skills but on the leader’s results. As Peter Drucker points out, “Popularity is not leadership. Results are.”<sup>11</sup> While people may hold a position of leadership, one wonders if a person has truly led until someone has followed, and more importantly, until God’s purposes are advanced. Pastors are to “equip and train saints” so that they may, in turn, equip and train others as well. This equipping and training can take place in various setting but the most effective way is through discipleship. Once pastors can make a honest and intimate friendship

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<sup>9</sup> Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: HarperBusiness 1997), 4.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, *Situational Leadership: A Summary* (Escondido, CA: Center for Leadership Studies, 2000), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Peter F. Drucker, foreword to *The Leader of the Future*, edited by Francis Hasselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), vii.

with a few of church leaders in the setting of discipleship, then there is a great possibility of growth and stability of the congregation. In fact, this is how Jesus exercise and practice his leadership. His leadership through discipleship equipped and empowered his disciples daily. "The central task of leadership is influencing God's people toward God's purposes."<sup>12</sup> What are God's purposes? One of them is clearly told and commanded by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."<sup>13</sup> God wants us to be disciples of Jesus Christ so that we can change our homes, society, and moreover, this world.

#### Leaders Are Made

George Barna conducted a survey of senior pastors from across various denominations. When asked if they believed they had the spiritual gift of leadership, only 6 percent responded yes.<sup>14</sup> The fact that 94 percent of the senior pastors surveyed did not believe they were gifted to be leaders may explain the sense of desperation many church leaders express as they examine their ministry and its current effectiveness. Peter Senge, in his book *The Fifth Discipline* observed:

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<sup>12</sup> J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 203.

<sup>13</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, scripture quotations in this D.Min. project are taken from *the Holy Bible, New International Version*, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

<sup>14</sup> George Barna, *Today's Pastors* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1983), 122, 125.

Most of the outstanding leaders I have worked with are neither tall nor especially handsome; they are often mediocre public speakers; they do not stand out in a crowd; they do not mesmerize an attending audience with their brilliance or eloquence. Rather, what distinguishes them is their clarity and persuasiveness of their ideas, the depth of their commitment, and their openness to continually learning more.<sup>15</sup>

Although childhood experiences, physical strength, failures, successes, and even birth order can impact general leadership abilities, there is an added dimension to the growth of a spiritual leader that is not found in secular leadership development. That dimension is the active work of the Holy Spirit in leaders' lives. Oswald Sanders notes: "There is no such thing as a self-made spiritual leader."<sup>16</sup> Spiritual ends require spiritual means, and spiritual means come only by the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul identifies leadership as something the Holy Spirit enables people to do (Rom. 8:12).

#### Leadership Is About Who You Are

"I have met many of the great men of my time, but Lee alone impressed me with the feeling that I was in the presence of a man who was cast in a grander mold, and made of different and finer metal than all other men."<sup>17</sup> This was the observation of Field Marshall Viscount Wolseley after he met Robert E. Lee. Lee's leadership is fascinating because even though he was grossly under-equipped in both manpower and supplies, he rarely lost a battle. Even more impressive is that, though they were overwhelmingly outnumbered and though they received few benefits, his soldiers were fiercely loyal to him

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<sup>15</sup> Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1994), 359.

<sup>16</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 1967), 33.

<sup>17</sup> H. W. Crocker, *Robert E. Lee on Leadership: Executive Lessons in Character, Courage, and Vision* (Rocklin, CA: Forum, 1999), 4.

throughout the Civil War. Even when the war was lost and it was futile to resist the vastly larger and better-equipped Union army, Lee's soldiers were prepared to continue fighting if he would only give the orders. What inspired such loyalty among Lee's followers? One thing is certain: it was not his rank as general. Other generals did not enjoy such loyalty from their troops. Nor was it Lee's ability to court-martial traitors; he was generally loath to do it. It is best concluded the key was Lee himself. Lee's soldiers followed him because of who he was.

### The Importance of Pastoral Leadership through Discipleship

Many aspiring pastors are aggressively pursuing prominent places of ministry. Instead of trying to grow their church, some pastors eagerly wait for their new appointment to a larger membership congregation with a better benefit. Pastors who fix their gaze on the horizon, hoping for something better rather than focusing on the tasks at hand, are unworthy to hold their current positions. Conversely, pastors who enthusiastically invest their energies into each new assignment or appointment God grants them will enjoy success where they are.

According to Max Depree, both religious and business leaders should enter a "covenant relationship" with their employees. Depree describes this as a "shared commitment to ideas, to issues, to values, to goals, and to management processes. Word such as love, warmth, and personal chemistry are certainly pertinent. Covenantal relationships are open to influence. They fill deep needs, and they enable work to have meaning and to be fulfilling. Covenantal relationships reflect unity and grace and pose. They are an



expression of a sacred nature of relationships.”<sup>18</sup>

That kind of covenantal relationship is possible through discipleship in group of a few devoted members and serious followers of Jesus Christ. Pastors as mentor and facilitator must guide them in discipleship training and invest in their lives. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) does not only give us the foundation for discipleship but that of a pastoral leadership as well. The effective and biblical pastoral leadership can be implemented and practiced through discipleship. Pastoral leadership through discipleship is more appreciated and needed in such a time as this. Chapter 2 will disclose several misdirected and unfamiliar concepts, which will help the pastors to analyze the problems and build healthy relationships with people of diverse cultures. Pastors need to further analyze the effectiveness of their leadership roles in multi-cultural ministries in order to engage in the full practicum of true discipleship.

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<sup>18</sup> Max DePree, *Leadership Is an Art* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1989), 60.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Pastoral Leadership in Multi/Cross-Cultural Settings**

#### Discovering High Demands in Emerging Composition of Diverse Ministries through Pastoral Leadership

Between 1980 to 2000 in the United States, while the non-Hispanic white population grew about 8 percent, the growth rate of other groups is far larger. During the same period (1980 to 2000), the African American population grew by nearly 30 percent, the Native American population grew by nearly 75 percent, the Latino population by 142 percent, and Asian American population by 185 percent. In absolute numbers, the United States has well over 35 million more people of color in 2000 than it did in 1980.<sup>1</sup> Not only does the population of the ethnic minority continue to grow, more pastors of these groups minister in different cultural settings. For example, the United Methodist pastors are appointed or assigned to a local congregation by the Bishop and they may end up in a multi-cultural, multi-racial, and/or cross-cultural setting. In fact, more than half of the Korean United Methodist pastors in the California Pacific Annual Conference are serving in the multi-cultural and cross-cultural congregations.

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<sup>1</sup> Calculations made from *Statistical Abstract*, 2001, population tables, accessed at <http://factfinder.census.gov>

As Christianity spreads throughout the world, many more nations and various ethnic groups come to the Lord and join together in the fellowship. The body of Christ is no longer compacted into one ethnic or racial group but comprised of vast number of people from different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. Everyone, without a single exception, comes together with different customs, beliefs, characters, and patterns in living which all derive from a specific culture(s). It should be the first priority of the pastor to be fully culturally aware and educated when encountering a new relationship and to deepen the ongoing friendship with his or her congregation members. "Culture is what we know, who we know, and how we do things. Cultural identities tell us who we are and give us a sense of belonging."<sup>2</sup> It has now become a difficult task for the pastors to administer successful ministries without cultural awareness and the strategic knowledge to assimilate various cultures in one body of Christ.

The new and rapid shift (multi/cross-culturalism) calls for many challenges and blessings as well in the traditional layout of the church. It heavily depends on how the pastor can wisely manipulate this rising trend in the Christian ministry.

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<sup>2</sup> Carolyn Schrock-Shenk and Lawrence Ressler, *Making Peace with Conflict: Practical Skills for Conflict Transformation* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999), 50.

The diversity within the church often calls for more wisdom and sensitivity on the part of the leaders, especially the pastors. George Yancey believes that the development of pastoral personal skills is valuable regardless of the racial makeup of the church.<sup>3</sup> Clergy of multicultural congregations have the task of juggling different cultures in a way that those who lead monocultural congregations do not. While there is no one "right" way to handle the mixture of cultures, those who have the personal skills to handle this task will be able to create a healthy multicultural environment for their churches and thus increase their chances of promoting healthy multicultural church growth.

Eric Law states, "Inclusion involves a great deal of thinking and listening when we take into consideration others' experience, history, feelings, and so forth."<sup>4</sup> As the churches nowadays portray varying colors and images of all people, we can no longer pursue one orthodox way to present the gospels and disciple fellow brothers and sisters. We need to further research, adapt, and attempt various methods and strategies to best nourish the congregation with a healthy appetite, especially in the United States where diverse ethnicity and race

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<sup>3</sup> George Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 119.

<sup>4</sup> Eric H. F. Law, *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), 7.

are part of one society and one church. Whether it is in a shared facility setting of multi-ethnic groups or in a merged congregation of people from different ethnic backgrounds, the pastors definitely need to realize the high demands of multi-cultural approach in their discipleship strategies and methods and the benefit that it brings to the church when it is applied the appropriate way.

Duane Elmer says,

It is no longer an option, but a duty and obligation in that we need to extend and welcome everyone in our ministries. We all need to gain understanding of other cultures, even if we never plan to leave the country where we were born in. As our cities become more and more culturally diverse, multiculturalism is fast becoming a survival skill.<sup>5</sup>

Not only do we need to shift the rigid paradigm of the church in order to meet the demand of the multi-cultural society, we need to learn and make every effort to embrace the differences of people other than our own kind because it is the way God intended the churches to be in the very beginning.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the

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<sup>5</sup> Duane Elmer, *Cross Cultural Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 13.

Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Eph. 2:14-22)

The apostle Paul adopted a theology of oneness after his life-changing encounter with the risen Jesus Christ. This theology of oneness implied that in the beginning God created one race, the human race. Jesus came to restore God's original intention of the essential oneness of all humanity. Biblical scholar F. F. Bruce writes that Paul's understanding of oneness was rooted in a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, to be "in Christ" described

An existence in which social, racial and other barriers within the human family were done away with. Among those barriers none was so important in Paul's eyes as that between Jew and Gentile. If before his conversion he looked upon it as one that had to be maintained at all costs, after his conversion he devoted himself to demolishing it doing in practice what had been done in principle by Christ on the cross.<sup>6</sup>

As long as we live in the multi-cultural society, it is crucial that our church needs to expand our ministry outreach to people of different cultures and experiences. This seems to be the more serious case within the United Methodist community. Many UMC pastors are appointed to churches of various

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<sup>6</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), 87-88.

racial groups and locations other than their own where they have no or very little familiarity with. In order to establish great relationship with the attending members and minimize internal conflicts, pastors need greater wisdom and strategies to close the cultural gap that divides the body and bring all the separated members into one harmonious accord by truly understanding how they think, act, and believe the way they do. In order to do so, pastors need to understand their lives, customs, ideals, beliefs, tradition, languages, and above all, cultures.

It is critical that pastors need to see through various multi-cultural lenses by appreciating and accepting different cultures other than their own. It is important to understand that the church is one body with various functions and characters. Christ originally intended the church to be of one body, meaning that we need to work together in harmony although we are different. Here we need to clarify an important concept of oneness in the context of the body of Christ. Church should function in unity and not in uniformity. It is critical to note the difference between the two. Unity is when the distinct characteristics of the individual are still recognized and preserved within one group whereas uniformity imposes a rigid "oneness" that everyone must be alike. It cannot be

altered by anyone at any circumstances. Many churches and pastors passively define and misattribute the term “oneness.” In fact, in the name of “oneness,” they often attempt to change the people to fit the situation or the structure by force. Here the main essence and the focus shift from an individual growth to particular organization’s prosperity. Soon the church loses the original intention and meaning of the church that Christ intended to be. No one has any right to change the nature of someone else to think, act, and believe the way he or she does. Church is a democratic organization under heavenly constitution and not under a communist dictation. This is where many churches fail to initiate and maintain multiculturalism because they expect everyone to be alike and require everybody to reach the standards, which are usually set by the pastor’s own ideology. In fact, every member, especially the pastor, needs to acknowledge the differences and incorporate good insights from various cultures in developing dynamic discipleship across cultures as one body of Christ. In a case where uniformity takes place in the church, an individual who stands out by the color of the skin, language, belief, and lifestyle cannot fit into the cliché. It is important to fully understand that implementing multiculturalism cannot survive in a “uniformed” church. Multiculturalism can only flourish in a church setting that



embraces unity, which is oneness that comes from the harmonious orchestration of diversity. Multiculturalism is at a crossroad and it should not be ignored.

When pastors successfully transmit discipleship across cultures and people, the entire church can experience the fullness of joy and the power of discipleship that comes in colorful packages, minimizing the conflict and maximizing the outreach.

### Common Misconceptions and Stumbling Blocks in Establishing Multicultural

#### Approach in Pastoral Leadership

First and foremost pastors need to take in order to succeed in multicultural church is to establish a firm bond and harmony with the church members. Across all nations and tribes, a church is a place where sinners and people who bear hurts and shame are gathered to seek forgiveness and acceptance. However, we often mark much more severe scars on people's hearts in church than any other places. This is a sad fact but also a serious irony that we cannot seem to avoid very well. Christians seem to be more comfortable in their little cliques than mixing and quicker to hurt than comfort. It is in our human nature to seek to be understood but only practice little effort to understand others. In order to do so, they need to be able to socially and culturally communicate with one another. Already living in the United States

among different cultures and traditions allow many of us to have some good idea how to relate and mingle with people other than of our own. However, our common understanding of other people may not be so accurate or in fact contradicts the reality. An anthropologist Edward T. Hall states, "Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants."<sup>7</sup> Although we live in a society where it is most diverse than any other parts of the world, we have yet much more to learn. Understanding and uniting with other people is not as easy as it seems. The roots of culture and traditions are heavily rooted from generation to generation. There are many things that we have not yet discovered and there are also many things that need to be clarified before we make our next move closer to embrace others. Therefore it is important that we get rid of some of the misconceptions that disturb us or misdirect us from making a more accurate observation and a richer experience when we encounter people of different culture. Only when we can embrace everyone, no matter how they look like, what language they speak, and why they think and act the way they do, can we get a step closer to the perfect church, which Jesus himself has shown.

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<sup>7</sup> Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1959), 39.

Despite the constant efforts and numerous expensive projects, churches still cannot unravel the mystery of the administration of a Godly church.

Throughout the Epistle of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul infers that the secret and the mystery of God's administration is portrayed in the form of gathering of all Jews and gentiles, which he meant the church.

Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 3:2-6)

Pastors and leaders must first realize the peace and harmony that it brings when they take a step back to see a bigger picture of the outfield. Duane Elmer says, "Genuine celebration comes from genuine appreciation. This requires learning and understanding, and these are incompatible with egocentrism and superiority."<sup>8</sup> The ideal goal of the pastor is to help the leaders and the congregation members to understand that the ultimate goal is to embrace one another at best to lift up a harmonious worship as one body of Christ. Thomas Sobol commented that "Our unity and our diversity are not

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<sup>8</sup> Elmer, 13.

opposites; they are necessary complements of each other. Both should be taught.”<sup>9</sup>

### Ethnocentrism

In agriculture, farmers first need to plow the soil before they begin planting the seed. In order to implement successful and effective pastoral leadership in multi/cross-cultural settings, we need to draw an undivided attention to the misconceptions that bind us from advancing. First common misconception is that many people believe that they need to give up their own cultural values and tradition in order to accept and appreciate one that is different. It is clear that there is not a single individual across all race and culture who wants to give in to others and when they do, they often feel inferior. Therefore they pursue their own way and never agree for a compromise. Ethnocentrism is a fatal threat and it challenges multi/cross-cultural ministries. A universal psychologist, Jean Piaget, labels infants as egocentric, unable to compromise, and only see and process information from one perspective, their own. We also call a selfish and an egocentric individual an immature person. According to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, the word immature means “lacking complete

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Sobol, “Revising the New York State Social Studies Curriculum,” *Teachers College Record* 95, no. 2 (1883): 258-72.

growth, differentiation, or development.” If egocentrism defines a person in such a belittling way, we can perceive a church that refuses or fails to address multiculturalism as an ethnocentric church in parallel light. The pastors, lay leaders, and the elders of the church first need to “grow up” from their immaturity, ignorance and inferiority and embrace the multi-cultural approach of administration, discipleship and worship.

Secondly, people need to learn to be flexible and open to changes.

Eric Law challenges Christians to be “change-ready” in order to do ministry in a changing world and he states:

For as Christians, our safety comes not from holding onto external things, rules or rituals, but rather our dynamic relationship with God through Christ. Jesus faced the cross with nothing but his relationship with God. We must have the courage to do the same, knowing that there will be resurrection on the other side. When we know how to hold on to this dynamic relationship with God through Christ, we are then empowered to make changes in our lives and our communities according to God’s will, not ours.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, many people feel very skeptical and uncomfortable about shifting gears and making the changes in their fixated life patterns sometimes not knowing that their stubbornness keeps them from advancing into the richer experience of life. There is a story about a monkey and the cookie in a glass jar.

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<sup>10</sup> Eric H. F. Law, *Sacred Acts, Holy Change* (St. Louis: MO: Chalice Press, 2002), 30.

A pet monkey saw a cookie in a glass jar on the kitchen counter. The monkey easily reached into the jar and made a big fist over the cookie. When the monkey was pulling out his hand over a cookie, he was stuck. The diameter of the opening of the jar was just big enough for the opened-hand of the monkey to fit through. The poor monkey stood on the cold kitchen floor struggling to free him from the attached jar. The only thing he had to do was to open up his fist, release the cookie, and simply pull up his hand. The ignorance of the monkey kept him in bondage and bound to a burden that he did not need. We can see the similar ignorant paradigm in church settings as well. When we plan and practice discipleship in a multi-cultural setting in particular, it is often dangerous to hold on to a particular or a preferred method, like holding on to activated dynamite. Pastors need to be daring when it comes to throwing away old and obsolete methods. They should be rather adventurous when implementing new approaches from different array of spectrum to fit the deeper needs of diverse members.

Many people are very reluctant to let go of their old stubborn ways even though they know it is of no or little use. Who cares if we let the English-speaking congregation have their service before the Hispanic service? What

difference does it make when the pastor speaks in Korean first rather than in English when they have a joint service? Many people do not realize that they need to initiate change and introduce new ways of worship for the appropriate group of the congregation. Unfortunately, some people resist change even though they know that their ethnocentrism or egocentrism leads them to destruction and discord, which we call ignorance. "When I resist change, I wallow in my own myopic ignorance, forfeiting the joy of learning from others and the exhilaration of discovering that God's world far exceeds my experience. When I resist change I remain firmly anchored in egocentrism, mistakenly believing that my cultural patterns are the best and only way. Ultimately, this arrogance leads others to conclude that Christ and his gospel are simply a variation of the Western culture."<sup>11</sup>

#### No "One Size Fits All"

Pastors need to realize that one tactic that seemed very practical and successful in one multi-cultural setting is not necessarily compatible in other congregation that is only one block down the road. It is crucial that each pastor be sensitive and quickly adapt to the unique character of the church. "One for

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<sup>11</sup> Elmer, 53.

all” marketing concept never applies in the multi-cultural ministries. Fitting right into church is much more complicated and at risk than purchasing a cap that is labeled, “one size fits all.” Let us take a glance at a school classroom with about 20 students. A teacher will eventually fail if he or she pursues his/her style of teaching even when it makes no sense to the students. The lecture is useless when it does not transmit any information. A good teacher is someone who can see from the students’ point of view, explain and solve the problem at the student’s pace with the way they best process information. If they are visual learners, use large pictures and graphs. If they are kinesthetic learners, use manipulative and big body movements that they can feel for themselves. If they are auditory learners, pop on the audio recording when they are reading. If they are explorative learners, let them struggle and learn through trial and error. In the teacher training institutions, potential teachers are trained and educated to come up with the strategies to better accommodate students with disabilities, ELL (English Language Learners) students, and students who just have their unique way to process information. “Although it is important to identify useful and promising instructional programs and strategies, it is erroneous to assume that blind replication of instructional programs or teacher mastery of particular



teaching methods, in and of themselves, will guarantee successful student learning, especially when we are discussing populations that historically have been mistreated and miseducated.”<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it is a more difficult challenge for a pastor of a church to provide the ways and means to dive into the hearts of people who are much older, meaning those who tend to be fixated and stubborn with their original ways.

Pastors really need to be brave enough to remove the stumbling blocks of hereditary customs and manners if no sense of unity and fellowship can be established. Pastors need to be culturally responsive and employ strategic discipleship to find the method or a plan that really is needed and that works and initiates positive social change with that specific make-up of the ministry.

#### Initial Human Reaction to Diversity: The Blame Game

Most conflicts that we come into contact in a multi-cultural setting starts from small units of misunderstanding, unmet expectations, small discomforts, and personal pet peeves that leads to arguments and confrontations. However, we tend to place the blame on others before we stop and think what the core of the problem is and coming up with a remedy. When we blame, we try to put it

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<sup>12</sup> Lilia Bartolome, “Beyond the Methods Fetish: Toward a Humanizing Pedagogy,” *Harvard Educational Review* 64, no. 2 (1994): 173-94.

further away from us and to others, someone in different ministry, and someone who looks differently, and someone who speaks differently. This naturally draws a clear and distinct line between various ministries within the same church. We are inclined to be defensive with our own kind and most of times more critical and offensive to the counter-group.

Our initial defensive and offensive mode leads to a serious misattribution of the problem. It nonetheless creates more confusion and problem within various ministries in multi-cultural settings rather than unraveling the puzzle. "Christians have often fought for the wrong things and splintered groups over individual preferences and personalities rather than violations of the core of our biblical faith."<sup>13</sup> We can only say that we have thought about it in other person's shoes when we understand their emotions and situations in the feeblest state rather than the ideal or the expected. Sometimes, just listening to what other people have to say can solve the dilemma, though it does not have to provide a solution to every problem. Thus we need to approach sensitively the person and ensure them to be who they really are rather than have them turn on their defensive mode. You are no longer opening up minds and hearts in the

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<sup>13</sup> Elmer, 25.

relationship but struggling with the useless outer layer of the person. Only when you go deep inside, can you establish an authentic relationship which leads to discipleship.

### Unconscious and Unintentional Reactions

No minds are a blank slate. Our conscious minds are not “pure.” We are born as sinners and we live as sinners in a sinful world. We are easily influenced by worldly customs and traditions as well as being constantly bombarded by worldly temptations. These do not exempt pastors nor Christians, if not more. Eric Law notes, “We may presume people who are different to be a threat to the safety and stability of our community. In order to protect ourselves from this perceived threat, we sometimes exclude others by insulating ourselves from them, or by shutting others out.”<sup>14</sup> Surprisingly enough, most cross-cultural conflicts are not intentional. Many of the common mistakes that we make can arise even when we try to make things work. That is why we cannot even rely on ourselves but have the Spirit of God empower us to obey according to God’s divine plan. It is also crucial to have accountability groups or members to check and balance the structural of the ministry.

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<sup>14</sup> Law, *Inclusion*, 5.

Striving for a multicultural church is like running a long marathon.

Establishing a strong foundation of a diverse congregation does not come up in one night or even a year. It is unwise to make quick judgments, especially about people's motives and character. A person changes all the time. In order to build an intimate relationship with a person, it takes research, encounter, questions, listening, and fellowship to get a general idea of that person's character, personality, and preferences. Sherwood G. Lingenfelter notes that one of the biggest problems in our churches is that we often insist that others think and judge in the same way we do. "We do not accept one another in love; rather, we try to remake those around us into our own image."<sup>15</sup> When one is full of judgment and prejudice, it leaves a little room for wisdom and understanding.

#### How Should We Interact?

For the hosting congregations, the embrace of differences requires suspending the privilege, status, and power they have enjoyed. "*Embrace* was the only English word we could find that caught up the interplay of differentiation

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<sup>15</sup> Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 64.

and intimacy in human communities.”<sup>16</sup>

For the nesting congregations, it involves transforming their patterns of protection and defensiveness into patterns of mutual engagement. The task is not easy for either party. Fear and apprehension are common. Those with more status and power tend to initiate topics, give directions, and provide information more often than those with less status and power. People in the nesting congregations tend to limit their speaking to giving answers, acknowledging information, and seeking the right to speak – unless they have decided to “watch” rather than try to enter the conversation. The challenge before pastors in culturally and racially diverse groups and congregations is to “level the playing field” – to create a space in which speech involves the mutuality of exchange.<sup>17</sup> Pastors and leaders through the years have developed many strategies for turn taking. Brainstorming is one familiar example. It requires that no one speak a second time, until everyone has had an opportunity to comment on the topic at hand. Through his work with multicultural groups, Eric Law has developed a strategy that he calls “mutual invitation.” It is in some

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<sup>16</sup> Charles R. Foster, *Embracing Diversity: Leadership in Multicultural Congregations* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1997), 1.

<sup>17</sup> C. A. Bowers and David J. Flinders, *Responsive Teaching: An Ecological Approach to Classroom Patterns of Language, Culture, and Thought* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990), 146.

ways a variation on brainstorming, with one significant exception. When a person finishes speaking, she invites another person to speak. That person may indicate that he has nothing to say at the moment but will invite someone else to speak. The act of inviting, which to some will seem awkward, has two functions. It affirms the value of a person "independent of that person's verbal ability" – an important issue in multilingual groups. It also recognizes the dynamic in several cultures in which a person does not speak until first addressed by another. This is especially true in cultures in which younger people will not speak in public as a sign of respect for the words of their elders.<sup>18</sup>

Eric Law makes it a discipline to present a set of Respectful Community Guidelines at the beginning of every meeting.<sup>19</sup>

R = take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel without blaming others.

E = engage in EMPATHETIC listening.

S = be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles.

P = PONDER what you hear and feel before you speak.

E = EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions.

C = keep CONFIDENTIALITY.

T = TOLERATE ambiguity because we are not here to debate who or what is right or wrong.

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<sup>18</sup> Eric Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993), 114.

<sup>19</sup> For a fuller description of how to help a community affirm such guidelines, see Eric H. F. Law, *The Bush Was Blazing but Not Consumed* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1996), 83-87.

Pastors in the multicultural congregations need to create an environment that will not favor one group over another, but will support and affirm each group, enabling them to dialogue constructively for the purpose of building a stronger, more faithful community.

### God's Design

Racial and cultural difference can be both an ongoing challenge as well as a blessing to experience the fuller and richer plan of God only if we throw away our stubbornness and embrace the differences of others. As we read from Revelation 7:9, we can see the complete picture of God's plan at the very end.

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands – with all nations and tribes of the world gathered at the feet of the Lamb of God.

“The world as God has created it is full of diversity. No matter how hard we try to isolate ourselves from these diversities, they are all around us.”<sup>20</sup> We can definitely infer that multiculturalism is no longer an option or even a necessity in pastoral leadership in the multi/cross cultural church settings but an absolute goal of all pastors and an ideal ministry.

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<sup>20</sup> Law, *Inclusion*, 5.

Chapter 3 is presented in the form of a case study – depicting my own experiences in shared-facility settings. It enlists practical approaches that pastors should take when practicing pastoral leadership in such settings. It is essential for pastors to encourage, empower, ensure, and educate his or her congregation as well as the other congregation(s) that shares the facility in order to bring about shalom fellowship.



## CHAPTER 3

### **My Own Ministry Experiences in Shared-facility Setting**

The issue of sharing a church facility is relevant for today because vast numbers of churches are experiencing dwindling membership and proportionately creating vacant rooms, rendering their church facilities prime candidates to share with other ministries. Many churches have shared facilities with day care centers and nursery schools and with community service organizations. However, over the last two decades or so, another element—other worshipping communities—has entered this parade of space users. A historic English-speaking congregation that had invited a Korean-speaking congregation to use its facilities discovered over time that, as its own members continued to move to distant suburbs, the future of the church in that place depended more on the rapid growth and expansion of this new congregation. These communities are separated, not by differences of faith or doctrine, but by race, language, and culture. This situation raises a number of questions.

In many cases, this experience of “shared facilities” is brought about almost solely by economic considerations. Traditional churches in changing neighborhoods with shifting demographic bases no longer fill their pews or their

educational facilities. So, sharing space with an organization that will contribute to costs has become an increasingly viable solution. However, immigrant communities also face economic hardship. Purchasing or building a facility is simply not in the picture for many of these new churches.

In some cases, this is a new and exciting reality, with learning and growth taking place in both communities. More often, however, there is little interaction between congregation, save for increasing tension and conflict. I once asked a UM pastor to give me the list of UM churches in this kind of shared facility setting and the first church he could think of was Wilshire UMC. As he wrote down its church name, he said that it was "not working well." We both laughed. But this church, Wilshire UMC, was featured in the *Los Angeles Times*. "Many Tongues, One Faith" was the title of the article and the writer quoted the Rev. Keith Andrew Hwang, who was then the director of ethnic ministries in the California Pacific Annual Conference, stating that "Churches will be and should be leading the way in modeling how people from different cultures can come together."<sup>1</sup> After reading that article, I became more convinced that we as Christians must learn to live harmoniously with other ethnic groups in our shared

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Hwang, "Many Tongues, One Faith," Los Angeles Times, 5 May 2001, B1.

facilities to establish God's shalom fellowship. It is necessary for churches to share their facilities with others not only because of economic considerations but because of evangelistic concerns that require mobilizing the gifts of "sharing" congregations.

This new reality calls us together in a love that is stronger than our weaknesses. It is true we will fight and misunderstand each other, that we will have conflict because of different backgrounds and perspectives. However, it is also true that the love of God in Christ is with us, calling us to work through conflict to come out stronger and more whole than before.

I would like to imagine the power of communities bound together in Christ, not by the singularity of language, or national origin, or even by class or money, but by the power of God's love in Christ Jesus. The community where God's shalom is visible and evident. "Shalom" is an exciting Hebrew word. "Peace" is just one of many definitions for this word. Shalom is wholeness, completeness, full health, and comprehensive well-being.

For the individual, Shalom is soundness of being in every way; between persons it means relationships of trust, openness and caring that enable wholeness; in groups and society it involves social justice so that no sectional

interest oppresses or exploits another; for nature it means living interdependently and responsibly, without pollution or destruction.

Shalom encompasses all reality, structural as well as personal. It speaks of the state of affairs where everything works and works together as God originally designed it. It is not a human achievement, but a gift of God.

As God created the world, everything was in shalom with God and with everything else. Then came the fall. Out of right relationship with God, everything lost shalom and became at odds within itself and with others. In God's love God has always pursued the restoring of shalom to God's universe. God's way is through God's own son, the Prince of Shalom.

One of the unique qualities that Bell Memorial United Methodist Church<sup>2</sup> in Rowland Heights has is that it consists of three congregations: Korean, Caucasians (now multi-ethnic English speaking group), and Chinese. Korean and Caucasian congregation have one senior pastor who is a Korean American and Chinese congregation has their own pastor and charter. All three of these congregations share the church facilities throughout the week. It is (or at this

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<sup>2</sup> This was one of my previous church appointments. My next appointment, Aiea Korean United Methodist Church, shares its facility with Caucasian, Samoan, and Japanese American. My current appointment is at Woodland Hills Korean United Methodist Church which shares with Caucasian and other groups (such as AA, MA, and traffic schools) using the facility as well.

point, I have to say "it was" and I will explain why soon) a seven-day-a-week church that caters to a person's multiplicity of needs and interests. Chinese congregation sponsors YWCA's senior citizen center which uses some of the church facilities six days a week and there had been a church-owned preschool for 27 years until year 2000. The church administrative board had decided to close down the preschool and help them to relocate it to another United Methodist Church due to lack of space availability and mainly for the safety of children since this church was going through a major renovation and construction work. Moreover some of the church administrative board members also wanted to relocate YWCA's senior citizen center. According to most of Chinese congregation, until Korean Congregation moved in and merged with Caucasian congregation, everything seemed to be going well although they always struggle financially. But after the merger, Chinese congregation felt somewhat threatened by the presence of a new congregation that has more members and is financially stable. The new pastor, who is Korean American, has been accepted as a friend, coworker, and leader by the congregation, which is predominantly Anglos and Filipinos. He dealt effectively and positively toward much of hostilities that were there. After he came to Bell Memorial UMC,

significant numbers of Korean members participate in leadership for various ministries of the English language programs, including UMW retreat, Sunday school, youth ministry, and food pantry. As in all multicultural and multilingual situations, there are challenges and problems to be resolved. These include questions of leadership, authority, funding, and policy. But these are the necessary issues, which are viewed as opportunities to learn to work together across barriers of culture. Creative struggle with these questions can help the congregation to mature, develop, and grow. Fortunately, the leadership of a senior pastor continues to influence and impact this multicultural congregation in the shared facility. There are things that pastors should do in this kind of setting so that they can establish shalom fellowship in shared facilities.

First, a pastor must encourage each congregation to understand and respect one's culture and way of thinking. Although this church has three congregations and they all know that there is misunderstanding and a lack of communication, they still do not want to talk to each other. According to Eric Law, it is partly due to one's perception of power and its consequences for leadership.<sup>3</sup> The definition of a leader is not the same in different cultures

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<sup>3</sup> Law, *Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, 15.

because how a person is expected to manage a group is dependent on the group members' perceptions of their own power. Since depending on the cultural contexts, a group's expectation of the leadership could be very different. But Eric's effort to reconcile people of different cultural backgrounds or to make "the Peaceable Realm" actually has created another problem: diminishing one's distinctiveness. Not necessarily their uniqueness (above others) but their distinctiveness (among others).

A pastor should encourage each congregation to find and see their distinctive role in shared facilities and use that distinctiveness to become a part of shalom fellowship. They can bring their own distinctiveness to the life and ministry of the church as a whole. The approaches to cultural diversity and inclusiveness in the church have tended to be all or nothing propositions. Either we seek to melt differences into a tasteless stew (or one that tastes only of the dominant culture), or we segregate our selves. Conflict is the result of differences that produce tension. It reflects our individual preferences, values, and lifestyles. It also connects with group preferences, values, and ways of doing things. Experts would define conflict something like this: conflict is a disagreement between interdependent people; it is the perception of

incompatible or mutually exclusive needs or goals.<sup>4</sup> Put more simply, conflict equals differences plus tension. It is the tension we experience when a difference is discovered. Ironically, conflict is an opportunity to know. Without conflict we tend to keep ourselves carefully hidden from God and from others. Conflict transformation requires more than the commitment of individuals to seek peace with each other. It requires groups who respect other groups and are willing to adjust their rules, patterns, and organizations to make space for others.

Acts 2:42-47 mentions about the fellowship of the believers in the early Christian church era. Every believer had their needs met because of the generosity of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Each of these three congregations at Bell Memorial UMC have not yet learned to live in harmony and unity with other "kinds" of people. Every Sunday, they hear the sermons from their pastor that directly relates to their individualistic way of lifestyle, not cooperative one. Although some say that most Asians do live in a communal setting and its concept is predominant in their cultures, this concept does not necessarily mean that they do or will cooperate well with other Asian ethnic group. It is true that no one ethnic group is trained so well to live harmoniously with

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<sup>4</sup> Joyce L. Hocker and William W. Wilmot, *Interpersonal Conflict*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Madison, WI: Brown and Benchmark, 1995), 21.



other ethnic groups but there has to be a way to make this thing happen. The solution may be found in God and pastoral leadership through discipleship. Since it is God's intent for people to live in harmony and to demonstrate God's love to each other (even to those other than one's "kind" of people), God has the key to bring people from different ethnic and economic backgrounds. One of the reasons why Korean and Caucasian congregations are getting along well is that not only do they have one senior pastor but they get to have a joint Sunday service every other month. The Korean and Chinese congregations have never had a joint service although one might think that they are culturally more close or similar to one another than they are to Caucasians. Robert Saucy writes, "The church is the place where the new life of Christ in the Spirit is manifest. The gospel reconciles man to God but also reconciles man to man. The evidence of this reality in the church is a witness to the world."<sup>5</sup> Saucy embraces the truth that reconciliation, when exhibited in the church – especially between divergent cultures – is a dynamic witness to the unbelieving world that is dramatically demonstrated in the act of corporate worship. There is no reason why both host and guest groups (a nesting congregation) cannot come together for corporate

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<sup>5</sup> Robert L. Saucy, *The Church in God's Program* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), 93.

worship under one Spirit. We should be able to set aside any misgivings toward one another to proclaim our witness to the public. Pastors who declare and teach God's word each week should have a clear understanding as to why they need to establish God's shalom community together and have a strong commitment to break down the cultural barrier, to build each other up by sharing their life stories and just simply to understand one another. A retired minister of Bell Memorial UMC whom I interviewed for this paper said that the problem is not a lack of communication but that there is no communication at all. Certainly both sides do have disagreements but no one knows what these are unless they get together, face to face, sharing what is in their hearts. There is no such thing as over-communication.

Communication is the key to understanding each other but in communication clarity is essential. Therefore, each pastor should have clarity of intentions (why do we want to do this?), clarity in directions (how will we go about doing it?), and clarity in reflections (what worked well and what did not?).<sup>6</sup> The pastor of each congregation must be able to find some times together to discuss the concerns and issues that have been raised by the church members and

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Jenkins and Deborah Jenkins. *The Character of Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988), 146.

clearly communicate what the problems are or what their intentions in certain matters are. Augsburg says that the person who knows but one culture, knows no culture.<sup>7</sup>

Second, a pastor needs to lift up what these congregations already have. Before empowering, one must realize that this situation (sharing one's facility with other ethnic group) is actually God's blessing for the congregation and they should perceive it, not as a root of the potential conflict, but as a beginning of the positive change that will be taking place in the community. Through this experience of sharing facilities, each congregation can be either strengthened or eroded away. This can provide a useful lens into many aspects of congregational life, including culture, leadership, and process. Congregations react to "inconvenience" and "conflict" differently. Some congregations ignore or suppress conflict; some embrace routine conflict as a positive good, viewing it as a sign of vitality; and some experience severe conflict that is difficult to resolve and that debilitates the congregation. Consequently, even when conflict is too painful for easy discussion, such episodes can provide valuable learning experiences when participants are willing to work at deciphering the messages

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<sup>7</sup> David W. Augsburg. *Conflict Mediation across Cultures* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 9.

that appear in the chaos.

Augsburger argues that every culture has the opportunity to become a teacher in some respect, and offer new perspectives to consider in conflict management.<sup>8</sup> He views conflict as another opportunity to share God's love and minister to people in anguish, confusion, and despair. He challenges people to move beyond the notion of conflict management to see the potential positive outcomes. Rather than another "how-to" course in "conflict management," Augsburger visualizes a process of "conflict transformation" in which conflicts are not catastrophic events to be avoided but opportunities to be utilized. The Bible is full of stories of conflict management (and conflict transformation). Dan Southerland notes, "You can measure a leader's maturity by how he responds to complainers."<sup>9</sup>

And in the process of empowerment, each congregation should actually appreciate each other's presence in that church community. It is no longer for economic consideration that one has other congregation using their facilities but for evangelistic consideration. (young people in Chinese congregation attends

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>9</sup> Dan Southerland. *Transitioning: Leading Your Church through Change* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 133.

Youth Sunday worship that the Korean ministry offers to their 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Korean immigrants). For instance, if the Korean congregation wanted to have an outreach program, then they could invite Chinese congregation to join them in that project (because there are more Chinese living in Rowland Heights than any other Asian groups do). Of course, Chinese congregation can speak Chinese and know their culture as they do an outreach program and vice versa. God has given us different gifts, talents, and cultures that if we utilize them effectively and empower what we already have to share God's love, we will make a significant change in our community.

Third, one must ensure the "lamb" can dwell with the "wolf" together as long as they are all in the fold of the good shepherd. To help them understand that we are all one in Christ for one purpose—to share God's love to the world. We are to view other ethnic congregations as our teammates rather than our competition, as our brother or sister rather than our burden. We are building God's kingdom, not our kingdom based on our cultural identity and heritage. And we need to let the other ethnic congregation in the shared facility know that their presence is not only appreciated but also actually essential in carrying out the mission of Christ. Those who rent a church building may feel somewhat

inferior and subordinate. They must feel secured and “protected” in a way that they may fully contribute to the life of the whole church.

Fourth, pastors must educate themselves to learn more about the ethnic, generational and cultural uniqueness of one’s congregation.

There are three practical ways that pastors can adapt to establish this shalom fellowship in shared facilities.

#### Young ⇒ Old

Kids easily mingle with kids from other racial groups than most adults do.

Whenever Sunday school of Bell Memorial UMC goes on a field trip (Knott’s Berry Farm, Fox Family Studio, Raging Waters, and etc.), all kids from all three congregations are welcome and invited. And when they come together in a group, everyone’s presence is appreciated and affirmed. As they get to know each other, the parents of these kids often become good friends too. The Chinese pastor’s two sons at Bell Memorial UMC are actively involved in the youth ministry that Korean congregation has. They know some of the youth members already because they go to the same high school and they do not have any language problem in that youth group because all speak English and all programs are conducted in English as well. Youth members are encouraged to

bring their non-Korean friends to church because the focus of ministry is not to carry out the Korean heritage but to carry out the Great Commission which is to share God's love to the world.

#### Few ⇒ Many

A few church members can get together to know each other in a more casual setting in which every group feels comfortable. These caring church members should know that evangelism and love demand welcoming the new people from different ethnic backgrounds. Even one or two key members with a godly rather than territorial bent can turn a congregation's culture toward acceptance. At Bell Memorial UMC, Fern Chaney who has been a church member for 60 years is now one of those godly people who is willing to be a "bridge-builder" to help others to appreciate the presence of other ethnic congregations within that church.

#### Pastor ⇒ Parish

The pastors must help their congregation to understand that the church does not belong to the natives (Anglo), although they have historically supported it. Nor does it belong to the newcomers (Chinese and Korean), who will probably change it and may eventually inherit it. The church belongs to God,

and the congregation that keeps that fact in mind will handle this shared facility conflicts best and effectively. After all, isn't a Christian leader someone who is called by God to lead with and through Christ-like character? Pastors must demonstrate that Christ-like character themselves first by prayerfully working together for the benefit of the whole church and not just one congregation.

Instead of treating the pastor of other ethnic congregation as a competitor, one should receive him/her as a Christian colleague with whom both can grow in mutual understanding so that people can also follow their pastor's friendship with each other in their own lives.

Jesus used many images to describe the relationships among those he had called together as his followers; one of the most common of these metaphors was the family. Jesus encouraged his disciples to address God in prayer as 'Father', and to see one another as brothers and sisters. The whole cluster of images related to the family becomes one of the most important metaphors in the New Testament. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul reminds them of the special obligations and loyalty they owe to one another as members of the 'family of believers' (Gal. 6:10). How can they love others if they cannot love their own? How can they love non-Christians if they cannot even love their



own brothers and sisters in Christ who has called us to be “one” just as he is one with God? Therefore, establishing this shalom fellowship in shared facilities is essential to demonstrate our togetherness in Christ Jesus. By working together congregations get to know each other and to demonstrate care for one another while dealing with ministry and outreach issues. Their collective insights and strengths sharpen their responsibilities for ministries which respond to community needs and concerns. And as pastors meet for sharing and planning, meaningful relationships of trust and appreciation for each other develop, and they discover the benefits of mutually providing pastoral support and peer accountability. Just like many streams form one river; each congregation with their very distinct background can form one church together. Many tongues but one faith in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 4 will discuss about the power and effectiveness of pastoral leadership through discipleship. Cultural division starts when pastors overlook cultural issues as mere discrepancies in style of faith. However, many cultural conflicts lie underneath the heart of people. Through discipleship, pastors can truly transform the heart of others to accept and build upon the diversity given to them as a blessing rather than a burden to carry.

## CHAPTER 4

### Pastoral Leadership through Discipleship

#### Why Is Pastoral Leadership through Discipleship Important?

The mission of the United Methodist Church is to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” Pastors are to equip their church members so that they may become disciples. Pastoral leadership through discipleship takes very seriously the role and responsibility of mentoring the disciples of Christ in the effective use of their gifts. Some pastors complain about the lack of zeal and passion of church members for God’s work. They say that members are not willing and wanting to commit to God and the church. Most people are, in fact, willing and wanting to grow in Christ. They just do not know how and where to begin. Sometimes it seems like it is not the members who do not want to grow and commit but rather pastors who want their flocks to stay unchanged and untransformed.

One of the causes of the low estate of discipleship is that pastors have been unwilling to call people to discipleship. “Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by a leader or shared by the leader and his or

her followers.”<sup>1</sup> John Gardner’s definition employs the terms “persuasion” and “example” to indicate the means leaders should use to move people toward their objectives. According to Gardner, leaders’ persuasion is never enough unless accompanied by personal example. Jesus did not only teach his disciples as to how they should live, but also showed us how to live a life that pleases God. Since discipleship is more caught than taught, it calls them to a level of self-examination that can be uncomfortable. It could be that their unwillingness to set the bar high for their congregations is because they want to let themselves off the hook. The quality of discipleship they are getting is not in spite of their leadership but because of it. The irony is that the fear of losing people if they call members to commitment is unfounded. Growing churches generally have appealed to idealism and sacrifice by calling people to God’s rescue mission through the church.

In order to see people grow and change in their lives, discipleship training must take place in a local church so that members can be nourished with God’s Word and also be encouraged with other fellow Christians. Once people are disciples and are being continually disciplined, pastors can lead the congregation

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<sup>1</sup> John Gardner, *On Leadership* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 1.

of disciples more effectively since there is trust and covenant relationship already built between pastors and core members. Discipleship brings unity and harmony among believers. It brings understanding and tolerance. It helps people see the world in God's way. Discipleship can literally change the dynamic of a congregation. Therefore, once church members are truly involved in discipleship training, their congregations will no longer be the same.

#### What Is Discipleship?

Bill Hull defines discipleship as "the intentional training of disciples, with accountability, on the basis of loving relationship."<sup>2</sup> The International Consultation on Discipleship established a working definition of discipleship that contains the elements of discipleship: "We define Christian discipleship as a process that takes place within accountable relationships over a period of time for the purpose of bringing believers to spiritual maturity in Christ."<sup>3</sup> The distinctive nature of discipleship is that it involves a relational investment intended to create an atmosphere of growth to maturity in Christ. Pastors need to invest in the lives of other disciples willingly and intentionally. Discipleship is an intentional

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<sup>2</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 32.

<sup>3</sup> International Consultation on Discipleship, accessed at [www.cookministries.com](http://www.cookministries.com)

relationship in which people walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well.

Unfortunately, the state of discipleship today is very *superficial*. There appears to be a general lack of comprehension among many who claim Jesus as Savior as to the implications of following him as Lord. This superficiality comes into startling focus when we observe the incongruity between the numbers of people who profess faith in Jesus Christ and the lack of impact on the moral and spiritual climate of our times. We focus on the benefits that we receive by faith in Jesus rather than on being conformed to the life of Jesus. We want abundance without obedience. Reducing the Christian life to embracing the gift of forgiveness has made obedience to Jesus in daily life irrelevant. How else do we account for the disjunction between professed faith and the quality of discipleship? We have disconnected the Christian life from the person who called us to follow him.

Discipleship is to bring the ministry of all of God's people to functioning practical reality. If the mantra regarding the value of real estate is "location, location, location," then the core ingredient in making disciples is "relationship,

relationship, relationship.”

Here are the nine traits that are critical to being a disciple of Jesus:

- D A disciple is disciplined in his or her daily life.
- I A disciple enjoys intimate friends with others.
- S A disciple's self-esteem reflects God's view of him or her.
- C A disciple is involved in corporate worship.
- I A disciple experiences an intimate family life.
- P A disciple feels true and compelling passion for God.
- L A disciple is involved in some sort of lay ministry.
- E A disciple is an evangelistic interest.
- S A disciple is committed to sacrificial giving.<sup>4</sup>

Biblical discipleship is all about the heart, about motives. It is about creating people of passion and desire. It is not about law and “should” and “ought to.”

### How Should Pastoral Leadership through Discipleship Be Done?

#### Pastors Must Disciple Themselves First

Many pastors are distracted with other good and high-sounding activities that have nothing to do with growing people to maturity and engaging them in ministry. Pastors have been diverted from their primary calling to “equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph. 4:12). This is exactly what has happened. They have shunted their spiritual leaders into being program developers,

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<sup>4</sup> Josh Hunt, with Larry Mays, *Disciple-Making Teachers: How to Equip Adults for Growth and Action* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 1998), 15.

administrators, and caregivers.

Pastors are busy with caregiving duties instead of investing in leadership development, discipling individuals to maturity, teaching people how to discern their call to ministry, managing a ministry culture where people are ministering to one another or visiting parishioners in the workplace. The saint's ability to minister remains woefully underdeveloped, since pastors do not focus on growing people to maturity and deploying them in ministry. We have an undisciplined church because its leaders have not made discipling their primary focus.

### Growth without Depth

The Joint Statement on Discipleship at the Eastbourne Consultation began with an acknowledgement of need: "As we face the new millennium, we acknowledge that the state of the Church is marked by growth without depth. Our zeal to go wider has not been matched by a commitment to go deeper."<sup>5</sup> John Stott has added his voice on this matter: "For many years, 25 or more, the church-growth school has been dominant. I rejoice in the statistics, but we must say it is growth without depth. I believe it was Chuck Colson who said the

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<sup>5</sup> The Eastbourne Consultation, Joint Statement on Discipleship, September 24, 1999.

church is 3,000 miles wide and an inch deep. Many are babes in Christ.”<sup>6</sup> The Scriptures picture the church as full of proactive ministers; the reality is that a majority of church members are passive recipients. The New Testament picture of the church is an every-member ministry. The “priesthood of all believers” is not just a Reformation watchword but also a radical biblical ideal.

Many observers have concluded that the church, far from being countercultural, does not look much different from the unchurched. The Scriptures picture the church as an essential, chosen organism in whom Christ dwells; the reality is that people view the church as an optional institution, unnecessary for discipleship. To be a follower of Christ is to understand that there is no such thing as solo discipleship.

#### Programs Do Not Make Disciples

The scriptural context for growing disciples is through relationships but pastors and church leaders have tried to make disciples through programs. Jesus called the Twelve to be with him, for through personal association their lives would be transformed. Proximity produces disciples.

In today's church we have replaced discipleship with programs as the

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<sup>6</sup> John R. W. Stott, quoted as a participating member of the Eastbourne Consultation.



means of making disciples. Examples of programs are age-graded Sunday schools, adult education classes, small-group ministries, or need-based seminars. All of these programs can contribute to discipleship development, but they miss the central ingredient in discipleship. Unless disciples receive personal attention so that their particular growth needs are addressed in a way that calls them to die to self and live fully to Christ, a disciple will not be made. Making disciples requires a customized approach. Barna states, "Few churches intentionally guide their people through a strategic learning and developmental process that has been customized for the student."<sup>7</sup>

Programs operate on the assumption that if someone has information, having that information will automatically lead to transformation. In other words, right knowledge will produce right living. Information alone does not lead to transformation. Rick Warren states "Instead of growing a church with programs, focus on growing people with a process. We need a process to go with purpose. Unless the purpose is fleshed out in a process, then we don't have anything but nice platitudes."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> George Barna, *Making True Disciples* (Ventura, CA: Issachar Resources, 2000), 79.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 109.

In spite of Jesus' clear strategy of calling people from the crowds and focusing on a few, many pastors continue to rely on preaching and programs as the means to make disciples. If pastors rely on the teaching content of preaching to fuel discipleship, then they have a misplaced confidence. Discipleship is fundamentally a relational process. They also rely on programs because they do not want to pay the price of personal investment that discipleship requires. By putting people through programs, they foolishly hope that they can mass produce disciples. LeRoy Eims critiques this approach incisively when he writes, "Disciples cannot be mass produced. We cannot drop people into a program and see disciples emerge at the end of the production line. It takes time to make disciples. It takes individual personal attention."<sup>9</sup> Jesus knew that he had to get beyond the superficial and prioritize a few if disciples were to be made. This required that his disciples have consistent, continuous exposure to his life, so that in the context of honest and open interchange, he could speak to the real stuff of their lives.

Discipling relationships are marked by intimacy, whereas programs tend to be focused on information. Alicia Britt Chole captures this difference between

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<sup>9</sup> LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1978), 45.

program and relationship: "Program was safer, more controllable, and reproducible – less risky, less messy, less intrusive. It seemed easier to give someone an outline than an hour, a well-worn book than a window into our humanity. How easy it is to substitute informing people for investing in people, to confuse organizing people with actually discipling people. Life is not the offspring of program or paper. Life is the offspring of life. Jesus prioritized shoulder-to-shoulder mentoring because His prize was much larger than information; it was integration."<sup>10</sup>

#### In a Group of Three or Four

Many equated making disciples with a one-to-one relationship. But by adding a third party to the one-to-one, the conversation in discipleship setting became alive. The person leading a discipling triad need not hold a position of authority, except to be the keeper of the covenant to which the group members have mutually agreed. The one-on-one relationship sets up a hierarchy that tends to result in dependency. One-on-one relationships limit the interchange or dialogue. Ogden proposes a nonhierarchical model that views discipling as a

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<sup>10</sup> Alicia Britt Chole, "Purposeful Proximity—Jesus' Model of Mentoring," *Enrichment Journal: A Journal of Pentecostal Ministry* (Spring 2001), accessed at [www.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/2001102/062\\_proximity.cfm](http://www.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/2001102/062_proximity.cfm)

mutual process of peer mentoring. In order to avoid the dependency trap, the relationship needs to be seen as side by side rather than one person having authority or position over another. The relationship turned into a peer discipling one in which each of them could honestly share their insights into the Word and its application to their situations. A group of three or four provides the setting to bring together the necessary elements for transforming or growth to maturity. When they bring together transparent relationships and the truth of God's Word in the context of covenantal accountability for life change, then they have stepped into the Holy Spirit's sweet spot that makes life change possible.

In this group of three or four, there is a shift from unnatural pressure to natural participation of the discipler. There is a shift from hierarchical to relational. The focus is not so much upon the discipler (pastors in most cases) as it is upon Christ as the one toward whom all are directing their lives. There is a shift from dialogue to dynamic interchange. There is a shift from limited input to wisdom in numbers.

#### Investing in a Few

Investing in a few at a time is the biblical pattern and model. Bruce draws the summary conclusion, "This careful, painstaking education of the

disciples secured [that] the teacher's influence should be permanent; that His kingdom should be founded on deep and indestructible convictions in the minds of a few, not on the shifting sands of *superficial* impressions in the minds of the many."<sup>11</sup>

A necessary and pivotal element in providing the motivation and discipline to grow fully devoted followers of Jesus comes only through personal investment. The motivation and discipline will not ultimately occur through listening to sermons, sitting in a class, participating in a fellowship group, attending a study group in the workplace or being a member of a small group, but rather in the context of highly accountable, relationally transparent, truth-centered, small discipleship group. Barna notes, "A majority (55%) of the adults who indicated their interest in hearing advice on how to improve their spiritual life also said that if the church matched them with a spiritual mentor to coach, they would be more likely to pursue the changes suggested to them."<sup>12</sup>

There are many things that church paid staff must cease doing if they are to leave behind self-initiating, reproducing, fully devoted followers of Jesus.

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<sup>11</sup> A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1971), 11.

<sup>12</sup> Barna, *Making True Disciples*, 42.

Usually the list of things that others could do includes caregiving responsibilities, various aspects of administration and attendance at committee meetings.

George Martin, the founding editor of *God's Word Today*, takes Jesus' strategy and challenges pastors to apply it to the way they think about ministry today:

Perhaps today's pastors should imagine that they are going to have three more years in their parish (church) as pastors – that there will be no replacement for them when they leave. If they acted as if this were going to happen, they would put the highest priority on selecting, motivating, and training lay leaders that could carry on as much as possible the mission of the parish after they left. The results of three sustained years of such an approach would be significant. Even revolutionary.<sup>13</sup>

Robert Coleman captured Jesus' methodology with the turn of a phrase:

"Jesus' concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men the multitudes would follow."<sup>14</sup> Jesus focused on a few because that was the way to grow people and ensure transference of his heart and vision to them. This kind of relationship, however, has been lacking in many of our churches. Robert Coleman has written, "The best work is always done with a few. Better to give a year or so to one or two men who learn what it means to conquer for Christ than

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<sup>13</sup> George Martin, quoted in David Watson, *Called and Committed* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1982), 53.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 21.

to spend a lifetime with a congregation just keep the program going.”<sup>15</sup>

### From Membership to Discipleship

As the notion of church membership has become increasingly meaningless in American society, church membership has lost much of its claim on the lives of today's Christians. Organizational affiliations are casual for many individuals, and a significant number of Christians view the church as just one more of these affiliations. This seems to be the only possible explanation for the high percentage of North American adults who nominally claim to be Christian but whose beliefs have little or no power to shape their lives, let alone add value or significance to their families and communities. But there is another side to this story. When congregations stop focusing on membership and reclaim the dynamics of discipleship, things begin to change.

The congregations need to make the decision to stop turning in and start turning out – a move from maintenance to mission, from membership to discipleship. The goal is discipleship. The critical issue is leadership. The minister as manager, the pastors as CEO, the leader as “the authority” are models of church leadership that are not worthy of the one who emptied himself and took the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7). The leader as disciple – as one who

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<sup>15</sup> Coleman, 117.

loves – and as a mentor of disciples – a mentor of those who love – is exactly what Jesus of Nazareth had in mind for his followers.

To move from a membership to a discipleship model of the church can cause extraordinary stress to organizations, systems, and those that lead them. But it is an experience of extraordinary opportunity, as well. In the confidence of the Holy Spirit, Christian leaders can be spiritually renewed and equipped for mentoring congregations into a new age of effective ministry and faithful discipleship.

In a growing church with more and more members to be served, this is a certain prescription for clergy burnout. The reason many churches don't grow – or stop growing – is that the pastoral staff reaches its limit for personal care and then, consciously or unconsciously, creates a climate and systems that discourage growth.

Membership is about getting; discipleship is about giving. Membership is about dues; discipleship is about stewardship. Membership is about belonging to a select group with its privileges and prerogatives; discipleship is about changing and shaping lives by the grace of God.

Discipleship is an old treasure that we need to pull out, dust off, and



commend to the “members” of our congregations. It is an old treasure that can be dressed in the new clothes of contemporary strategies, methods, and technologies. Discipleship is about following in the way of Jesus Christ. It is no accident that the earliest disciples were called “people of the Way” long before they were first called “Christians.” Discipleship is about individual Christians – and the church as a community of Christians – living in mission. Discipleship is about recognizing that Christ is in the center of both personal and public life and then living out the implications of that reality. For the first two centuries of the Christian church’s existence, membership was the consequence of discipleship.

In the membership model of the church, the pastor functions as a family or individual caregiver. The pastor is expected to meet individual parishioners in their time of need and bring to their person or their family the spiritual resources of the church. The pastor is the prayer, the reader of Scripture, the point at which heaven touches earth.

In the discipleship model, the pastor still may do these things, but with the intent of modeling the constant intersecting of life with the Spirit and so mentoring people in the life of the Spirit. The aim is to practice the art of spiritual care in such a way as to connect individuals with their own spiritual resources and the

strength and power of their own prayers.

For “members” of the church within the membership model’s patterns of codependency, faith is not costly. Personal spiritual growth is not expected. People are neither responsible nor accountable for their own spiritual journeys. Spiritual disciplines and practices are not encouraged. Should an individual become frustrated with the church and its ministry or feel spiritually empty and “unfed,” it is quickly concluded that there must be a problem with the pastor or some other staff member or lay leader. If the pastor or other leader does not change and thus “fix the problem,” the result is usually outright – or passive-aggressive – conflict, followed by either the capitulation of the pastor or the departure of the member.

The pastor as spiritual leader is emerging as a much more dynamic and effective pastoral role than those of pastor as caregiver, teacher, and preacher. Not the pastor as spiritual authority, but as spiritual leader, guide, or mentor, one who, out of the depths of his or her own spiritual life, can lead others into spiritually grounded lives of discipleship.

The discipleship model does not use guilt or coercion to engage people in the work of the church. Rather, it proclaims the promises of Christ and

encourages people to be who they are in response to the call of Christ.

The membership model stifles the gifts of God's people and pigeonholes the "members" into roles that may not suit their gifts at all. Any church that takes seriously the Spirit-given gifts of its people and both encourages and enables their use as a matter of faithful discipleship will thrive in the twenty-first century. Those that do not will struggle and die.

A membership-driven culture is characterized by an entitlement mentality. A discipleship-driven culture is characterized by a generosity rooted in the generosity of God. A membership church asks for money (and people resent it). A discipleship church simply reminds people in many and varied ways that life is pure gift and that the giver of life is liberal in sustaining life with every good and beautiful thing (and people give). It is called "consciousness raising" – creating opportunities for people to consider what is real and respond in faith.

#### Equipped to Encourage and Edify

When the disciples of Jesus are able to connect their gifts and passions to concrete acts of mission, they give far more time and energy than we could have imagined. Churches can use a number of personal assessment tools, including a spiritual gifts inventory, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and the

Enneagram. Whatever tools you might choose – and there are many – it is wise to develop a congregational priority and strategy for identifying the gifts of God's people in your community of faith. The more we learn about ourselves and about those with whom we serve, the better able we will be to match personal gifts with community roles and activities.

Disciples, of course, live in the world as well as in the church. Faithful discipleship in all the places we live and work and play is also enhanced through the increased self-understanding and appreciation of our particular skills, interests, passions, work, and relational styles, an understanding and appreciation that come from a careful use of gift and personality assessment tools.

John Maxwell has written:

Those who believe in our ability do more than stimulate us – they create an atmosphere in which it becomes easier for us to succeed. Creating an environment that will attract leaders is vital to any organization. Doing that is the job of leaders.<sup>16</sup>

And according to Noel M. Tichy:

The essence of winning leadership [is] building into the future by developing the abilities of others.... Winning companies win because

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<sup>16</sup> John Maxwell. *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 17.

they have good leaders who nurture the development of other leaders at all levels of the organization.<sup>17</sup>

### Give Them Jesus

Some of those pastors who know the importance of pastoral leadership through discipleship of a few members unfortunately try to make their *own* disciples, not Christ's. Leaders in the church should not *have* disciples. When they do, the community of faith all too often degenerates into a personality cult. When the leader leaves, the church falls apart. That is when the church splits and the body of Christ is divided. Those who used to worship together become "enemies" and in fact, some even stop attending church. The leader's call is not to gather people around himself or herself, but to gather them around Jesus.

As important as Jesus' teaching was, it was his person that became the vehicle for the transmission of his life to his disciples. David Watson draws into sharp focus the centrality of the person of Jesus: "When Buddha was dying, his disciples asked how they could best remember him. He told them not to bother; it was his teaching, not his person, that counted. With Jesus it was altogether different. Everything centers on him, his person. Discipleship means knowing

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<sup>17</sup> Noel M. Tichy. *The Leadership Engine* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), xiv, 3.

him, loving him, believing in him, being committed to him.”<sup>18</sup> The message was enfolded and inseparable from who he was. “Knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation.”<sup>19</sup> Jesus is saying that discipleship training is not about information transfer, from head to head, but imitation, life to life.

### Build Slowly but Solidly

Robert Coleman puts the key issue in stark focus: “One must decide where he wants his ministry to count – in the momentary applause of popular recognition (program splash) or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen ones who will carry on his work after he has gone? Really, it is a question of which generation we are living for.”<sup>20</sup> We judge our success by the number of people in our church. We adopt the latest program that seems to produce results somewhere else. Behind these efforts is the mentality of the instantaneous.

To be effective, authority must be delegated along with responsibility to accomplish a mission. As one delegates, these four simple practical steps need

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<sup>18</sup> Watson, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Coleman, 39.

<sup>20</sup> Coleman, 37.

to be followed: I do, you watch; I do, you help; you do, I help; you do, I watch. It is generally fair to say that the effectiveness of one's ministry is to be measured by how well it flourishes after one's departure. Jesus took the initiative to call his disciples to himself after spending the night in prayer; discipling relationships should be formed on the basis of a prayerful invitation by the one initiating the discipling relationship. How does this approach differ from the usual church program? Instead of inviting people to a program or class for which they sign up, attend and complete their assignments, they are invited into a relationship of mutual love, transparency and accountability.

#### Remember the Commandment to Love

Most people who are opposed to the gospel are not opposed to love. If we love people they will come to love our Lord. Jesus in John 13 says that if we love one another, then the world will know that we are disciples. In other words, disciples are the ones who will bring people to Christ through their love for one another and for God. One of the most motivating influences in life is the positive example of a friend. We need to cultivate an atmosphere of acceptance and grace through discipleship which will be discussed in depth in the following chapter in light of my own ministry experiences.

## CHAPTER 5

### **My Own Ministry Experiences of Discipleship Training**

#### Connected through Discipleship

When I was appointed to Aiea Korean United Methodist Church in Hawaii, there were absolutely no teachers for youth and college group although there were more than 50 students attending every Sunday morning. Most Korean adults felt inadequate to teach because of the language barrier (although their English was fine, it was hard for them to teach the Scripture in English because their Bible learning experiences were done in Korean). Those adults who could speak English fluently felt unqualified to teach because most of them were new to Christianity and not Korean (they were non-Korean husbands who were married to Korean wives). After many prayers, I asked those non-Korean husbands to come and join the Discipleship Program that I would be teaching every Tuesday nights. We met at one member's house and had dinner first followed by a casual talk. The actual Discipleship session started around 8 or 8:30 after dinner and ended around 10 or 10:30 p.m. There was one time that we were still sharing our thoughts on our Bible reading and it was 11:30 p.m. Those husbands still did not want to finish the meeting. Soon their wives began



calling me if their husbands were at that house where we were meeting. I still remember that night clearly. That night I saw faces of God's people who were eager to know God's word and to do God's will.

A few months before my new appointment from Aiea Korean United Methodist Church to a new church in California, with a senior pastor's approval and also with a support from SPRC (Staff-Parish Relations Committee), I asked those who were in the Discipleship group to get involved in ministry: Randy to preach to children (they had their own Sunday service), Scott to be in charge of Youth group, and Charles for college group. Ron, a middle school PE teacher, allowed our students play on his school campus once a month and his wife provided a snack. They were all non-Koreans working and serving in the Korean congregation. More importantly, Norman was appointed by the church to supervise and oversee the elementary department as a Sunday school principal. The first non-Korean to take that role in that congregation. From this ministry experience, I learned to value the importance of working together and effectively utilizing the gifts that God has given to every one of us. As a minister of Christ, I need to help people find their God-given talent and ability to bless not only their lives but others as well. I learned that when people use their

resources and times for God, they feel more connected to God and to the body of Christ, the church. Therefore, they will not only continue to serve God's people but also invite others do to so as well. I also learned that God really uses anyone who has a willing heart. It's not necessarily a matter of our ability but our availability to God that God sees and honors.

When I was appointed to Woodland Hills KUMC (my current appointment), the tension between Korean-speaking adults and English-speaking young adults and youth was a serious problem. Neither side wanted to admit to wrongdoing and did not want to find ways to reconcile. There was absolutely no conversation between those two groups and if there was any, more misunderstanding occurred. During my first three months of appointment at WHKUMC, I focused on reconciling these two groups. To do so, I had to show how that could be done.

First, I began setting up the tables for lunch every Sunday and folding them afterward all by myself. Actually some adults had been doing it before I came to this church but I told them that I would do it with young people. Those adults who were setting up the tables were in 50's and 60's. So each Sunday I was setting up about 17 tables including 130 chairs and putting them back on the

stack and carts after lunch. Although lunch was prepared for everyone (young and old), only adults ate their lunch and young people bought their own food at the fast-food restaurants. Young people did not want to do anything with adults. They saw some old folks were setting up the tables and chairs but did not want to offer any help. Only a few weeks later after I began setting up the tables and chairs myself, some of young people began to help me out. After one or two months, youth and young adults were setting up the tables and putting them away after lunch. I also cleaned their worship room with some of their core members and soon they did it on their own.

Pastors can dramatically influence the culture of their churches through their own work habits. Being a leader does not mean one has "made it" and is now exempt from hard work. Rather, pastors should set the pace for others. Few things discourage church members and volunteers any more than lazy pastors. Pastors should not ask their people to undertake tasks they are unwilling to perform themselves. While the role of pastors does not allow them to spend all their time laboring along side their church members and volunteers, they can seek to encourage members by their example of hard work. Pastors should ask themselves, "If the people in my congregation worked with the same

intensity as I do, would they enhance the operations of this church or would they reduce it to a crawl?"

This means that if the pastor urges his members to participate in a workday at the church on Saturday, the pastor is there in his work clothes, not in his study finishing off Sunday's sermon. It means that when a pastor assigns a passage to be memorized, she learns the verse herself. A leadership position of a pastor does not provide immunity from sacrifice; rather, it often provides occasions for an even great effort. If Pastors find that their congregations are filled with selfish, lazy members, they need to understand that each member is ultimately a microcosm of the church, and a reflection of its pastor. Pastors influence others by their example.

After three months, I asked young people to join the Discipleship Program (DP) and we met once a week to learn about God's word and encourage one another in Christ. For those people who were away from their home and church because of their study (such as those in Berkeley and San Diego), I offered Discipleship Online so they could still feel connected to church no matter wherever they were. Through Discipleship, people began to see the church as God would see. Their anger toward adults turned into prayer for them instead.

They began to sense and feel God's presence in their daily lives. More young people were saying "hello" to adults and engaged in conversation with adults. Meanwhile they continued to be involved in Discipleship and soon the word "Discipleship" was on everyone's lips. Adults also opened their hearts toward young people and elected three young people to be on SPRC, Board of Trustee, and Lay Leadership Committee. That was the first time ever at WHKUMC to elect young people who were still in college to be on such committees (very rare in Korean churches). Young adults are working very closely with adults now. For instance, for Sunday Korean-speaking service at 8 a.m., young people come to church by 7 a.m. to practice and lead praise for adults at the 8 a.m. service. One even gets up at 5:30 a.m. to come to church from Pomona every Sunday and yes, she is in the Discipleship Program. Young people continue to set up the tables and chairs and also have a joint family Sunday service every first Sunday of each month. What I learned in this ministry experience is that we are one family in Christ. If one suffers, everyone suffers. We are interdependent with one another. Our unity in Christ is one of the best evangelistic tools. And through discipleship training, it is possible.

People are hungry to know more about God and want to know how they

can effectively live out their Christian lives. The implications this has for ministry in my local setting has been great. Many people who were without much purpose and vision in their lives became someone who found their meaning in God as they were striving to know God more in Discipleship Training. Those who rarely come out to church for Sunday service and Bible study have made their commitment to be more consistent in their Sunday Worship attendance and Bible study (or Discipleship Training). People who have gone through the Discipleship Training have literally changed the dynamic and atmosphere of the churches that I served and ministered. In our UMC, the Bishop appoints pastors to a local church. Therefore, pastors may not have a long-tenure in one church setting. This may create and cause a lack of lay leadership. In order to solve the problem, laity should be involved in Discipleship Training and this should be a constant thing for both laity and clergy.

The implication this has for being a connectional church is through training and equipping others in those churches that have no lay leaders and Sunday school teachers, we can grow together. As disciples of Christ we also need to teach others how to be disciples of Christ as well. There is a need for the training of able leaders who can carry out that task. If discipleship is present

in a church, then more disciples will be produced there. God will build and strengthen God's church. If leaders are not equipped to carry out such a task, the consequences are obvious. There will be no healthy church growth. Any growth that is seen in the church will be stunted due to the lack of able leaders. Churches are full of hungry church members who want to be Disciples of Christ. There are many willing leaders who are willing to sacrifice time for the building up of the church. Willing workers do not seem to be an issue. However, those workers are hungry for direction and equipping to carry out their duties. We should not only make and train disciples in our congregations but also offer a seminar and training on how to make Disciples of Christ and share the know-how that we have learned and experienced in our own journey of discipleship. We want to see all our churches grow together! That is the purpose of "Discipleship Institute."

There seems to be many who want to have discipleship in their churches. "Discipleship Institute" seeks to show them how. At the Discipleship Institute we gathered leaders from many churches. In fact, about 80 people showed up and attended this event on August 27 (Sat.), 2005. Discipleship Institute emphasizes the importance of discipleship through preaching and addresses

specific areas of discipleship through training seminars led by those who have done Discipleship Training. We even offered Discipleship Online for those leaders who would be interested in Discipleship but cannot find anyone to disciple them. Discipleship Institute benefited and equipped leaders in our denomination as well as others. The actual schedule looks like this below.

9:00 - 9:30	<b>Registration</b>
9:30 - 9:50	<b>Praise</b>
9:50 - 10:30	<b>General Session</b> "Discipleship & Worship"
10:30 - 10:40	<b>Welcoming</b>
10:40 - 11:00	<b>Introduction of the Seminar Leaders</b>
11:00 - 11:10	<b>Break</b>
11:10 - 12:00	<b>Ice Breakers / Fellowship</b>
12:00 - 1:00	<b>Lunch</b>
1:00 - 1:20	<b>Praise</b>
1:20 - 2:00	<b>General Session</b> "Why Discipleship?"
2:00 - 2:15	<b>Break</b>
2:15 - 3:30	<b>Seminars</b> "The Fire That Ignites" - <i>Youth only</i> "Discipleship" "Called to Greatness"
3:30 - 3:45	<b>Break</b>
3:45 - 5:00	<b>Seminars</b> "A Life God Rewards" - <i>Youth only</i> "The Fire That Ignites" "Experiencing God Together"



5:00 - 5:20	<b>Praise</b>
5:20 - 6:00	<b>General Session</b> "How to Disciple?"
6:00 - 7:00	<b>Dinner</b>

The challenges churches will face over the next 5-10 years is a lack of dedicated members and disciples of Jesus Christ in the UM congregations. People tend to do church hopping, not making a commitment to any congregation but rather looking for churches that will benefit them instead of them benefiting and helping the church. We continue to witness the decline of membership and worship attendance because people merely attend church to "fulfill their member's duty" on Sundays but not really getting involved in ministry to make changes in other people's lives as well as their own. People are not becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. People are not being transformed and restored to their relationship with God. But this trend can be changed and we can make a positive impact in our denomination by concentrating more on making disciples of Jesus Christ.

#### My Wesleyan Approach to Discipleship

My understanding of Discipleship is nothing new and, in fact, the ideas came from John Wesley's class meeting. According to David Watson, the former Executive Secretary for Christian Formation at the General Board of

Discipleship of the United Methodist Church, the class meeting was a weekly gathering at which members were required to give an account to one another of their discipleship and thereby to sustain each other in their witness.<sup>1</sup> This is exactly what I do with people in the discipleship group: meeting every week with them in a small group setting, confessing sins to one another, and striving to be holy before God by studying the Word and praying together. People in the discipleship group can honestly share their struggles and problems to one another without worrying about being judged by others and all matters are confidential within the group. In this setting, the Wesleyan notion of “watching over one another in love” is practiced and encouraged. David Watson states, “By failing to help one another to be open to God’s grace, we are deliberately opting for self-sufficiency in our discipleship.”<sup>2</sup> Discipleship members must understand that they are all interdependent and one’s spiritual growth can impact and influence the whole group.

According to the General Rule of Discipleship, the United Methodist congregations are “To witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his

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<sup>1</sup> David Watson, *Covenant Discipleship: Christian Formation through Mutual Accountability* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 17.

teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup> Covenant Discipleship groups, patterned after the early Methodist class meetings, are designed around this General Rule of Discipleship and they help people to endeavor not only to witness to Christ, but also to walk with him in a balanced obedience of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion. David Watson notes that the group’s agenda is focused on what members are doing about their Christian living in the world, centered on the General Rule of Discipleship and this gives their weekly meetings a structure within which they can reliably hold each other accountable and respond to the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> This is the kind of discipleship we really need. We need to make disciples of Jesus Christ who balance acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion.

Chapter 6 provides some tips in regards to the pastor’s spirituality in leading a discipling congregation that embraces diversity. A head-full knowledge of multiculturalism alone does not transform the heart of people. It is the pastor’s spirituality that motivates people to be one as disciples of Christ.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2004* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2004), 532.

<sup>4</sup> David Watson, *Forming Christian Disciples: The Role of Covenant Discipleship and Class Leaders in the Congregation* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991), 105.

## CHAPTER 6

### **Pastor's Spirituality as the Foundation of a Pastoral Leadership**

#### Pastors Are Disciples of Christ First and then Spiritual Leaders

The pastor is first and foremost a disciple in his or her own right.

Disciples are not perfect – but they keep on following Christ, making up for their own weaknesses with the strengths of others. If the pastor wants his or her church members become disciples of Christ, they must become one first. If the pastors want one's congregation grow, he or she must want that congregation to grow. The pastor must have a strong future-orientation. Church growth expert, Lyle E. Schaller, states, "Growing congregations are characterized by stronger pastoral leadership."<sup>1</sup> Pastoral leadership does influence the growth and vitality of the congregation. Then what influences a pastoral leadership? What is the driving force of one's pastoral leadership? It is a pastor's spirituality. The relationship one has with their God. The stronger it is, the more effective one is in ministry. If pastors preach and teach what the Lord has taught them during their private devotional time with God, they will preach and teach with enthusiasm and heart-felt conviction. If the subject excites them, chances are

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<sup>1</sup> Lyle E. Schaller, *Growing Plans* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 85.

that it will interest their congregation too. If it speaks to their deepest spiritual needs, chances are that it will speak to their congregations' as well. Since each pastor is their own pastor and spiritual leader, the question one needs to ask themselves is whether they will still go to their church where they minister and preach each week. Obviously Jesus does not judge the health, vitality, or potentiality of a congregation based on its level of activity, its financial and human resources, or its reputation as being an exciting, lively place to be. What Jesus is interested in his stewards is whether they were faithful or not (Matt. 25:21, 23).

George Barna notes, "Ultimately, many people do judge the pastor not on his ability to preach, teach, or counsel, but on his capacity to make the church run smoothly and efficiently."<sup>2</sup> In essence, he is judged as a businessman, an area in which he has received no training or preparation. In fact, even the pastor's ability to use his training in religious matters hinges on his business capabilities. Unfortunately, he must be a good enough businessman to keep the church solvent and make it appealing enough for people to attend before he has the chance to impact their lives.

#### Pastor's Spirituality Influences Many

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<sup>2</sup> George Barna, *Marketing the Church* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 14.

Since pastor's spirituality is so vital in one's spiritual growth, and church growth as well, pastors need to continually be in tune with God. It is also important to have the church staff regularly invest their time and resources for their spiritual development and nourishment. William M. Easum states that "the attitude of the pastor, the staff, and the congregation are the most important factors in church growth."<sup>3</sup> In order to have positive attitude as spiritual leaders, pastors need to get the strength in the spiritual realm which mainly comes through prayer. A regular devotional time for one's spirituality helps pastors to understand the will of God. During this time, pastors will learn through prayer and reading of the Scripture as to what God wants for one's congregation. Then the pastor is able to give the people what they need, rather than what they think they want. The indispensable leadership cannot be developed unless a pastor demonstrates the likeness of Christ in his own life and thereby inspires and equips some people for leadership.

People want a pastor who shows personal integrity. This is interpreted as one who is able to honor commitments by carrying out promises despite all pressures to compromise. People desire an exemplary individual in their pastor.

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<sup>3</sup> William M. Easum, *The Church Growth Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 55.

Such as individual is described as one whose personal belief in the Gospel manifests itself in generosity, and in general, a Christian example that people in the community can respect. This is possible only through prayer.

### The Praying Pastor

The pastor's prayer life is critical for several reasons. First, nothing of eternal significance happens apart from God. Jesus said it clearly: "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Leaders who neglect a close relationship with Christ will be unable to accomplish God's will through their organizations. It is that simple. Yet many pastors struggle in their prayer lives. Prayerless pastors can keep full schedules, but they will look back over their activity and realize that, despite their best efforts, nothing of eternal consequence occurred. Biblical praying can be the most challenging, exhausting, laborious, and yet rewarding thing pastors ever do. Prayerless pastors are like ship captains without compasses – they can make their best guess at which direction to go, but they have no assurance they are heading the right way. Prayer keeps pastors focused on the one absolutely consistent factor in their lives – God.

Second, prayer is essential because to be a spiritual leader of the church, one must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Pastors cannot fill themselves with the

Spirit. Only God can do that (Eph. 5:18). While all Christians have the Holy Spirit's presence in their lives, the condition of being filled by the Holy Spirit comes through concentrated, fervent, sanctified prayer. God's promise is: "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13). Without the Spirit's activity, people may be pastors, but they are not spiritual pastors.

God's wisdom is a third reward for dedicated praying of a pastor. God is the leader of spiritual leaders and pastors: he knows far more than even the best informed pastor. God is infinitely wiser than the most astute pastor (Rom. 8:26-27; 1 Cor. 2:9). He knows the future. God knows what he wants to accomplish and how he intends to do it. God's invitation to pastors is "Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things which you do not know" (Jer. 33:3). For pastors to have this kind of relationship available to them and then choose not to communicate with the one who wants to guide them is a gross dereliction of duty (Luke 18:1-8).

God is all-powerful. That is a fourth reason pastors should pray. God can do far more than even the most resourceful pastors and leaders. God's promise is open ended: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find;



knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7). If someone is angry with a pastor, reconciliation might look impossible. But God can melt the hardest heart. Pastors can be stymied when people refuse to cooperate. But God can change people’s attitudes overnight. There are times when even the most powerful CEOs in the world can do nothing but retreat to the privacy of their executive office, pray, and let God work. When Nancy Reagan was diagnosed with a malignant tumor and had to undergo a mastectomy, her husband, though he was President Ronald Reagan, realized that even being the most powerful executive in the world had its limits. Commenting on that day, Reagan confessed: “For all the power of the president of the United States, there were some situations that made me feel helpless and very humble. All I could do was pray – and I did a lot of praying for Nancy during the next few weeks.”<sup>4</sup> The truth of life is that it is filled with situations that can only be overcome by God’s power. The most powerful position pastors assume is when they kneel.

A fifth reason to pray is that prayer is the pastor’s best remedy for stress. Pastors are intimately acquainted with stress. Leadership and pressure go hand in hand. Scripture encourages leaders to cast “all your anxiety on Him,

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<sup>4</sup> Ronald Reagan, *Ronald Reagan: An American Life* (New York: Pocket Books, 1990), 693-94.

because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). Because of their position, most pastors carry a heavy load of responsibility. It may be difficult to find someone with whom they can share their concerns and fears. Sometimes circumstances dictate the need for complete confidentiality, so the pastor bears the weight of responsibility alone. But there is one who is always ready to carry the burden for them. Christ said his yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matt. 11:28-30). When pastors allow Christ to carry their emotional and spiritual loads, this takes enormous pressure off them and allows them to face even the most difficult assignments with peace.

Finally, God reveals his agenda through prayer. Jesus modeled this truth in his life (Mark 1:30-39). At the outset of his public ministry, when Jesus was staying in Peter and Andrew's home, crowds of sick and demon-possessed people came to the house seeking healing. In fact, the Bible says the entire city turned out to see Jesus. Jesus healed many people until late into the evening. Early the next morning, Jesus rose and went to pray. The people wanted to keep Jesus in their city as the "resident healer," and they were reluctant to let him go. If Jesus had been a modern pastor he might have reasoned, "I am obviously having success here and receiving a good response from the people.

Perhaps I should stay here for a while until my reputation is firmly established.”

Instead, Jesus sought his Father's will. As Jesus prayed that morning, the Father helped Jesus understand what the agenda of the crowd was and he reaffirmed his agenda for his Son – to preach and teach in all the towns and villages and eventually to be crucified in Jerusalem. When the disciples found Jesus and told him the entire town was looking for him, Jesus responded, “Let us go somewhere else” (v. 38). Jesus would not be sidetracked from his Father's agenda because he was in regular communion with him in prayer.

More than any other single thing pastors do, it is their prayer life that determines their effectiveness. If pastors spend adequate time communing with God, the people they encounter that day will notice the difference. When pastors preach sermons, their people can soon tell whether or not they are speaking out of the overflow of their relationship with God or whether they are merely preaching a sermon. When pastors give counsel to others, the wisdom of their words will reveal whether or not they are filled with the Spirit. The holiness of pastors' lives is a direct reflection of the time they are spending with holy God. When spiritual pastors take their task of leading people seriously, they will be driven to their knees to prayer. They will recognize the magnitude of

their responsibility to lead people. This truth is evident in the life of Moses.

When the Israelites sinned against God and built a golden calf as an idol, God intended to punish them for their sin. In one of the greatest intercessory prayers in the Bible, Moses pleaded: "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin – but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written" (Exod. 32:31-32; cf. Deut. 9:4-21).

Moses recognized his people's failure as being his failure, because he was their leader. He could not stand by and watch them be destroyed, even if they deserved it, so he offered a sacred plea – his own life for theirs. Such sacrificial, earnest, heart-wrenching prayer is characteristic of great spiritual pastors.

There will be times when pastors will come to the end of their own resources. In those times they will understand there is nothing more they can do for their people. Giving speeches will not fix the problem. Issuing memos will change nothing. Calling in consultants will be futile. There are simply some things that can only be achieved through prayer (Ps. 50:15). Prayer connects us to the Infinite and thus opens up infinite possibilities.

George Barna wrote one of the better summaries on the topic in his book *User Friendly Churches*<sup>5</sup>. In this study of some rapidly growing churches in America, he found that prayer was the foundational ministry of the church. The church emphasized prayer in at least four major areas.

First, church members were exposed to biblical teachings about prayer in the Christian life. ...

Second, the church leaders, beginning with the pastor, modeled dynamic prayer lives. ...

Third, the rapidly growing churches learned that praises for answered prayers were an integral part of prayer itself. ...

Fourth, growing churches engendered accountability for the church, and the prayer life of church leaders were regularly held before the church.

Prayer must be the means by which we see God's vision for our churches, and it must also be one of the principal weapons in the warfare against those powers that would impede the growth of the church. Wagner's empirical research affirmed this: "The more deeply I dig beneath the surface of church growth principles, the more thoroughly convinced I become that the real battle is a spiritual battle and that our principal weapon is prayer."<sup>6</sup> Prayer is the power behind the principles. There simply is no more important principle in church

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<sup>5</sup> George Barna, *User Friendly Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1991). See chapter 10, "You Do Not Have Because You Do Not Ask."

<sup>6</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1990), 46.

growth than prayer.

Wise counsel here comes from a liberal evangelical of yesterday, Charles

E. Jefferson:

Be entirely yourself. If you are genuinely yourself you will not pray like anybody else . . . . Begin by speaking the thing uppermost in your heart. Always start where you are. Let your present experience determine what you are to say first. If you are full of gratitude, give thanks. If you are weighed down with contrition, confess your sins. If you earnestly desire some particular thing, pray for it at once. If it is not your own need but the need of others that is most potent in your thought, let your prayer begin with intercession. Much depends on beginning aright. You do not begin right unless you begin where you are most alive.<sup>7</sup>

A spiritual leader recognizes his or her own need for spiritual strength.

The spiritual leader who encourages others to pray must first be a prayerful person. The leader who calls for the service of others in the world must first engage the world in self-giving service. The leader who lifts up the need for spiritual truth in our world must first live in and out of that truth. The leader who would proclaim the word of God, who would effectively bring a word from God into each and every context of contemporary life, must first live deeply in and from the word. This is discipleship. This is authentic Christian spirituality.

### The Praying Disciples

In a discipleship culture, people expect to bring prayer into the decision-

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<sup>7</sup> See Charles E. Jefferson, "How to Pray," a leaflet, n. d.

making process, be it individual or communal decision making. The personal decisions that they make each day – decisions as to how they spend their money, how they spend their time, how they structure their relationships, how they do their jobs, where they get their pleasures, and the life – are informed by the presence of God experienced through both prayer and a prayerful encounter with God's word. And it is the same with the corporate decisions of the community of faith. Discipleship congregations learn to "be still and know that God is God" (Psalm 46:10). They learn to search the mind of God by applying God's word to the realities of their life together, by waiting for God, by listening for the voice of the Spirit that guides the church.

### The Praying Congregation

Creating of a strategic prayer ministry that first involves the staff and then moves into the entire congregation is important. The ultimate goal is to deepen the faith life of the whole church – not just support the staff.

Seldom have great spiritual awakening come to pastors, churches or countries without intercessory prayer. John Hyde, a praying missionary, before an awakening in India, asked Christians these questions to stimulate faithfulness in prayer for revival:

- Are you praying for quickening in your own life, in the life of your fellow workers and in the church?
- Are you longing for greater power of the Holy Spirit in your life and work, and are you convinced you cannot go on without this power?
- Will you pray that you may not be ashamed of Jesus?
- Do you believe that prayer is the great means for securing this spiritual awakening?
- Will you set apart one-half hour each day as soon after noon as possible to pray for this awakening, and are you willing to pray till the awakening comes?<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Quote from a letter to Focus on the Family, Jan. 12, 1994.



## CHAPTER 7

### Conclusion

According to the Bible, ministry does not come from the top-down; it extends from “one to another.” Christians help each other develop discipline in their daily lives, and encourage each other to become committed disciples of Christ. God designed the church to be a level organization where there are “no little people,” but where people help each other develop the daily disciplines that characterize a disciple of Jesus in regardless of their race and culture. Volf suggested that we are called to embrace others because we are created to reflect the fellowship that exists in the triune God.<sup>1</sup> Churches in the 21st century are now comprised more than just one ethnic group. Thus, establishing the harmonious fellowship within multi-cultural church is much more difficult and constantly challenged. The church needs to embrace any of cultural differences as gifts and resources to its life and ministry rather than as problems to be avoided or overcome. These relationships form an integral part of becoming and being a disciple. Our God is a God of unity as seen in his revelation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Miroslav Volf, “God’s Spirit and God’s People in the Social and Cultural Upheavals in Europe,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 29, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 230-48.

Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three often operate independently from one another, yet agree as one to proclaim the greatness of God. This, also, is God's plan for his universal church, that they would be independent, yet agree as one – to proclaim the greatness of God.<sup>2</sup> And the pastoral leadership through discipleship that is culturally sensitive makes it possible for many cultures to join as one body in the name of Christ.

The church needs more leaders and pastors who are culturally opened and informed, at the same time true disciples of Christ. As we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need to attend to the rising demands of multiculturalism in society and above all, obey God's calling to a new order of life – embracing diversity and building universal churches that can break the dividing walls of cultural and linguistic barriers and worship God in one spirit and truth.

Therefore pastors need to educate themselves in order to be open-minded as they encounter people of different backgrounds and cultures. The knowledge and the passion toward multiculturalism do not come naturally or as easily as it may seem. It is a constant battle and a research project that needs to be

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<sup>2</sup> Ralph D. Curtin, *Sharing Your Church Building: A Must Read for Any Church Leader Considering a Church-sharing Arrangement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 167.

tackled and experimented with. Although the process is difficult and unclear, our hope lies in a God who enables us to experience the power of the Omnipotent as we worship, fellowship, and disciple with people of all nations. Manuel Ortiz testifies how he was amazed at how wide and long and deep and high is the love of Christ that makes very different people as one body.

Until now we might have thought of God as siding with our cultural group and with our concerns alone. But the diverse group in the sanctuary reminds us that our God is also active in other lands, caring for the child in Bangladesh and the mother in the Tijuana countryside as well as the young man who is selling his wares in northern Nigeria. People from all these locales are gathered here in one place for one reason – to express their adoration to God. When the service is completed and the people begin to exit the sanctuary, profound spiritual fellowship takes place as people who have the same redeemer God engage each other.<sup>3</sup>

Church is not a place for cultural competition but a common ground where all people of all nations can join together as heirs of God's kingdom. Now imagine a pastor who is multi-culturally equipped and also carries a genuine passion for God. The pastor will not only be a successful shepherd of the flock but a revolutionary leader across all earth and seas. John C. Maxwell describes a congregation that is led by a genuine pastor: "Morale is high. Turn over is low. Needs are being met. Goals are being realized.... Leading and influencing

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<sup>3</sup> Manuel Ortiz, *One New People* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 12-13.

others is fun. Problems are solved with minimum effort. Fresh statistics are shared on a regular basis with the people that undergird the growth of the organization.”<sup>4</sup> “A few members of any church must get thoroughly right with God,” was evangelist R. A. Torrey’s first rule for revival. However, if a pastor is serious about renewal in his or her ministry and church, the rule must be personalized with his or her own name. By sharing their distinct and colorful life and giving themselves up to discipling a few members at a time, the pastors will not be only in tune with God continually but the congregations as well which will result in a genuine revival. Therefore pastoral leadership can most effectively break the cultural barriers and invite people to be one in Christ when it is integrated with discipleship in multi-cultural settings.

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<sup>4</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), 9.

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